DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 128 032 JC 760 468

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TITLE Changing Role of the Community College President in the Face of New Administrative Pressures.
INSTITUTION American Association of Community and Junior Colleges, Washington, D.C.
SPONS AGENCY Shell Companies Foundation, New York, N.Y.
PUB DATE 76
NOTE 63p.
AVAILABLE FROM AACJC Publications, P. O. Box 298, Alexandria, Virginia 22314 ($2.00)

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$3.50 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Accountability; *Administrative Problems; *Administrator Role; Collective Bargaining; Community Colleges; Educational Finance; *Futures (of Society); Government Role; Institutional Research; *Junior Colleges; *Presidents; Public Opinion

ABSTRACT

This paper looks at the job of the community college president in light of new trends and developments affecting administrative leadership. American higher education is entering a new era in which the community college president may expect intensified pressures in the areas of finance, governance, public confidence, employees' search for security, and governmental control brought about largely by a changing student market. Presidents will face a difficult task in satisfactorily answering the public's questions regarding the value of a college education. Institutional research must become an integral part of the community college in order to present the facts pertinent to the success of the community college. Economic problems, which may affect the "open door" philosophy, must be resolved, and presidential judgment will be required in this regard. As the collective bargaining movement grows, presidents must be prepared to cope with the pressures it implies in all areas of administration. Community college presidents can expect increased levels of governmental regulation, coordination, centralization, and control, with a concomitant increase in emphasis on governmental relations. Their role of influencing policy for educational enactments will also expand. No simple solutions can be equally successfully applied to every community college problem although some actions are suggested herein. (JDS)

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CHANGING ROLE OF THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE PRESIDENT IN THE FACE OF NEW ADMINISTRATIVE PRESSURES

Joe B. Rushing

As the title suggests, this paper deals with the job of the community college president. It looks at trends and developments affecting administrative leadership. It offers suggestions for responding to and alleviating some of the pressures. The author, Joe B. Rushing, is chancellor of the Tarrant County Junior College District in Texas. The essay is presented by the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges in cooperation with the affiliated Presidents Academy, with support from the Shell Companies Foundation. Copies are available at $2.00 each from the Association.

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Washington, D. C. 20036
Printed in U.S.A.

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I

A NEW ERA FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

> Unless a sharp turnaround occurs in the rate of college attendance, higher education - as presently structured and defined - will require continuing and substantial adjustments during much of the remainder of this century.[1]

After thirty years of steady, even spectacular growth, American higher education is entering a new era. It promises to be a period in which the pressures on leadership will be as great as those of the 1960's, albeit of a different nature. The community college experience may not parallel that of the university in terms of predicted declining enrollments, but the resultant problems will vary only in degree. The community college president may expect intensified pressures in finance, governance, public confidence, the employee's search for security, and governmental control brought on largely by a changing student market. The changing role of the community college president emerging from these pressures is the subject of this paper.

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[1] Glenny, Lyman A., et al., Presidents Confront Reality, Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1976, p. 1.

Discussing the changing role of the community college president requires caution. An administrator could easily be lured into drawing from the experiences of routine institutional problems. The reservoir of experiences which the chief administrator puts into play in the day-to-day operation of a community college could fill volumes. Presidents could recite an almost endless array of the problems inherent in the position of chief administrative officer. They know the pressures brought by constituents on behalf of applicants for positions and by disgruntled taxpayers complaining to governing boards. They hear a plethora of student protests ranging from criticism of grading practices to discontent with food services. They grant, or deny, the plea of a parent for an extension of a deadline, and try to ignore the subtle hint of a contractor that specifications should be written in his favor. These are things that go with the job. It is important to know how to handle them. More important is the need to face broader issues and prepare to deal successfully with future pressures before those pressures become crises.

Higher education in America, especially that segment known as the community college, has an impressive history. Community college leaders can look back with a great deal of satisfaction

on the development of these institutions during the first seventy-five years of this century. This backward look provides useful points of reference, especially as it prepares leadership to resolve today's problems and to identify, and prepare for, the pressures which will plague the community college of tomorrow. In this paper an attempt will be made to identify some of the major challenges to the community college administrator. Some of the problems have been around a long time. Others are of more recent origin. The future will bring about those never before experienced and new facets of old ones. They will be there to challenge community college leaders during the remainder of this century, and the nature of the times will not allow evasive action.

As this segment of higher education approaches the end of its first century, one may be sure that the history of its second century will be determined by the way in which the leadership meets and resolves current issues.

The last three decades have been exciting ones for community colleges. They have been years of phenomenal growth. Over this period, the fundamental purposes of the two-year institution have been achieved to extents never visualized by the founders. Urban areas have been the loci for the

development of complex institutions offering a huge array of programs, granting admission to almost every interested citizen, dispersing learning centers out to the people and providing flexible scheduling to accommodate many thousands of students.

Smaller towns and cities have benefited from the establishment of colleges, similar in philosophy and differing only in size, which have become centers of learning, the arts, and recreation. This is the community college of 1976.

The years immediately following World War II were significant ones for community colleges. America's historic faith in the value of education was given new expression by enactment of the "G I Bill." It was in the late 40's and early 50's that American colleges were to first feel the impact of great masses seeking admission. Among these were thousands of people who, for economic, academic or other reasons, would never have sought admission to a college or university. While they became the students in all types of institutions, a great many found their way into two-year colleges. For a time, they were to shape the character of the student bodies throughout the nation.

The decade of the 50's saw the rise of a new social consciousness. Unrest, new social programs, extensive

legislation -- all had their impact on society, and the education community found itself at the focal point of this change. Again, the public's faith in education was evident when the nation looked to schools and colleges as the primary vehicles through which social equality could be achieved.

In the late 1950's, the great expansion of community colleges began to make that institution an element of higher education worthy of attention. In part because of numbers seeking education beyond the secondary school, partly because of the costs of financing postsecondary education, but primarily because of the inability or unwillingness of traditional institutions to meet the challenge of this new era, many states turned to the two-year college as a viable solution. States like Texas, California, and Michigan began rapid expansion of existing systems. In other states, such as Florida, legislation was enacted establishing new community college systems designed to provide all the people with postsecondary education. In the fourteen years immediately following World War II, twenty-one new public community colleges were opened in California. During the same period, Texas was to add eleven new community colleges.[2]

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[2] Directory, American Association of Community and Junior Colleges, Washington, 1976.

With the coming of the 60's, the movement continued to accelerate. Community college leaders took pride in saying that new institutions were being opened at the rate of "one a week" throughout the nation. The growth in the numbers attending these institutions was reflected in the growth of new colleges.

Another element very much in evidence in this period tended to overshadow the more optimistic picture of growth of institutions and programs. That was the violence which centered on the university campus. This storm was an overt and painful manifestation of social change. Some actions resulted from well meaning effort on the part of dedicated people. Other acts must be attributed to opportunists who rode the wave of social change to reach their own less altruistic objectives.

The community college, in general, was spared this turmoil. Where it did affect the two-year college, it was largely a spin-off from violence at other nearby institutions and agencies. The reasons the community colleges were spared may never be fully known. Perhaps they were not considered significant targets. The nature of their students could provide a partial explanation. Many persons like to feel

that the community college remained relatively calm because it was not guilty of many of the shortcomings laid at the door of the university. Perhaps community colleges have been on the leading edge of social and educational reform. If this is true, the leadership of these institutions have an even greater responsibility to keep the community college in that respected position.

The picture has changed. Speakers and writers comment on the new attitudes of today's students. Researchers report renewed interest in career education. All of this is welcome news to the community college president. He still expects, however, to hear at any moment the sound of the dropping of that "second shoe"!

The pressures of the past, it is clear, have helped to shape the presidency of the community college today. These pressures and others now becoming evident will shape the presidency of the future. In the following sections, some of these new pressures will be discussed. They are problems facing every community college president in varying degrees. Whether the institution is large or small, urban or rural, public or private, the role of the chief executive is evolving in the face of new administrative pressures.

II

THE PRESIDENT AND THE PUBLIC'S ATTITUDES

> The growth of our national wealth, like the enhancement of the quality of our national life, depends on education.[1]

Caroline Bird, author of The Case Against College, may not agree with the above statement. Ms. Bird, and a sizeable group with similar outlooks, are capitalizing on the changing image of postsecondary education. Their evidence is the selected, often remote cases of failure. No doubt that some people, having limited knowledge of the field, are impressed with the non-success of today's college-educated person.

Despite reports of renewed purpose among many college students, there is a less encouraging side to the picture. Many youths, whose idealism has not been tested by reality, are revealing a tendency to avoid formal education beyond secondary school.

Public officials are asking searching questions. Faced with growing demands for public funds, they are becoming

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[1] Ostar, Allan W., "What Uncle's $34,000 Won't Buy." AGB Reports, Vol. 17, No. 9, November/December 1975, p. 46.

increasingly critical of the scope, programs, and products of colleges. With greater frequency than ever before, educators are called upon to answer questions about a host of issues -- job markets, drop-out rate, grade inflation, enrollment limits, teaching load -- as they defend their requests for funds. Implied in the search for answers is the question, "Is a college education really worth what it costs?" To those who understand the system, and to those whose contact has been a satisfying personal experience, the answer is a resounding "yes!"

The disillusioned constitute a minority. In a sense, it is good to have a pressure group forcing a social institution to continually evaluate itself. The danger comes when that minority ceases to become a constructive force and becomes, instead, a cause of deterioration.

Is there a growing disenchantment with postsecondary education? Earlier reference was made to the traditional faith of Americans in the educational system. This confidence had its origin in a frontier society. There, one's knowledge and skills largely determine success, or even survival.

The business community has recognized the value of education in tangible ways, chiefly through compensation and

advancement. Social agencies have traditionally relied on education as an instrument of social change. Lawmakers and government executives have found the school a convenient vehicle for the implementation and enforcement of public policy.

Educational institutions, principally those at the postsecondary level, have relied upon, and sought to strengthen the public's faith in education. To do this, spokesmen for colleges and universities have put forth valid claims emphasizing the benefits of college study. The value of general education has been accented. Religious groups have stressed the roles of their own institutions in the spiritual and moral growth of their students and to the strength of the nation. In the community college, the benefits of education for vocational and recreational purposes have been widely accepted.

In recent years a major factor in marketing a college education has been its monetary value to the one who has it. The American public has been made a constant target for statistics comparing the lifetime earnings of groups categorized by level of education. Invariably, these earnings are shown to be directly related to the level of

education achieved by persons included in the studies. In a growing economy, such claims have been easily supported. The college president, using this testimony on behalf of his profession, was not called upon to give a critical analysis of its meaning. Presidents today, and in the immediate future, will have a more difficult task.

News media carry items questioning the credibility of claims for the economic value of higher education. One "horror story" reports that graduate sociologists are driving taxis because that's the only employment they can find. Graduates with Ph.D. degrees, it is reported, are forced to serve as laboratory assistants because faculty positions for which they have prepared are not available. Official published estimates of the need for college-educated workers seem to be alarmingly lower than the numbers being prepared by the nation's colleges and universities. Such stories are many and, despite efforts at explanation, have their impact on the attitudes of those who are the beneficiaries of higher education and the public which supports the system.

Knowledgeable community college people may quickly refute criticism of the impracticality of postsecondary education. They can demonstrate the close cooperation between the

college and the business community. They may be able to show an impressive record of job placement of graduates. This helps but does not solve the image problem. The community college, in the minds of the public, is still a part of the total scope of American higher education. Those in the field recognize the differences, even subtle ones, but the man on the street does not make those distinctions. The community college president, though he may "march to a different drummer," will always feel the pressures of criticism mainly directed at other segments of the system.

The important question is, "How does the community college president respond to an apparent lagging faith in education?" A response is required. It is obvious from the history and current status of community colleges that its critics are in the minority. The president can take little comfort in this fact. Public policy may not necessarily be determined by the majority who believe in the system.

The community college president must correct a grave weakness which has beset two-year colleges from their beginning. Placing great emphasis on the student, these colleges have stressed the teaching function and have proudly and enthusiastically denounced over-commitment to

research. As a result, institutional research has been tragically neglected. It must be an integral part of the community college of the future. Only by this means can the president make the right decision, take appropriate action, and tell the complete story of his institution. The community college has a great success story which justifies the public's confidence. It only has to develop the facts and present them in an understandable manner. This can be done with a research commitment and an effective plan.

The community college claims to be different. There are many pressures--state control and coordination, federal regulations, desire for "respectability,"--to minimize this difference. Much of the public does not differentiate between the community college and other institutions of higher education. The president has the task of maintaining its unique character. It is his responsibility to lead the faculty, staff, students, and community in developing a feeling of pride in a college with "dirt under its fingernails."

The public's positive attitude is an indispensable factor in maintaining the open door policy. As the pressures mount to shift an increasing share of costs to the student, an understanding and sympathetic constituency will be the

difference in free access and opportunity limited to those able to pay. The president and governing board cannot withstand this pressure alone but must develop strong support by citizens who influence the shaping of policy.

Public relations has traditionally been a major responsibility of the community college president. It remains so today and has increasing implications in view of new stress anticipated tomorrow.

III

THE PRESIDENT AND THE ECONOMY

> "In 1975, the dominant fact about many of our institutions is their economic plight. . . Despite their many differences, these institutions share a new complex problem; their income is rising, but their costs are rising faster. The resulting financial gap is one of the nation's major problems."[1]

Dr. Cheit was referring to all institutions -- educational, governmental, public, private -- but for the purpose of this paper, emphasis will be placed on the community college.

No problem is of greater importance to the president than that of the fiscal well being of his institution. This is true not only of community colleges but of higher education in general. Throughout the nation, colleges and universities, public and private, large and small, are feeling the pressures brought about by economic change.

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[1] Cheit, Earl F., "Managing Fiscal Resources in Higher Education During A Period of Rising Costs." Proceedings, 24th SREB Legislative Work Conference, August 27-28, 1975, Southern Regional Education Board, Atlanta, Georgia.

To reflect on inflation as it affects citizens is a sobering experience. When applied to educational institutions, the problem is compounded. Studies over an extended period reveal that costs in American higher education have risen faster than the normal rate of inflation. From the period 1930 to 1960, it rose by 2½% per student per year over the normal rate of inflation. In recent periods of very rapid growth, per student costs rose at an even faster annual rate of 4 to 6%. Data from the U. S. Office of Education show that for the ten-year period 1963-1973, the average annual rate of increase for the nation was 2.3% per student in constant dollars.

A look into the future does not present an encouraging picture. Many public community colleges have remained fiscally solvent largely because of enrollment growth. With the prospect of leveling, or eventually declining enrollments, their futures look grim. A projection by USOE into the first half of the 1980's shows an estimated per student increase of 2.9% per year in constant dollars.

That is the cost problem. How will community colleges, in face of the best information about the future, be able to maintain programs of quality in the face of rising economic pressures?

The solution to rising costs may be sought in several places. Pressures are on to increase tuition in community colleges in many parts of the country. These pressures have already resulted in action in a few cases. The community college president faces a dilemma. On one hand, how can he meet rising costs, and on the other hand, how can he maintain the "open door" which is perhaps the most vital ingredient in the community college philosophy? Will economic pressures of the future move the community college from a stance of egalitarianism to one of elitism? If the community college is to remain what it purports to be, it cannot resolve its financial problems by tuition alone.

For some colleges a part of the answer may be in increased local support. The increasing reluctance of taxpayers to further extend the ad valorem tax, however, offers scant hope of a viable solution. Furthermore, many community colleges do not have this source available to them.

The main source of relief, then, seems to rest with state legislatures. Securing such relief will not be easy. Already action in some states presents a grim picture of what may follow. Limits on college budgets, moratoriums on salary increases, enrollment ceilings and attacks on so-called "frill"

courses are examples of these actions. Even in states where legislators are willing to increase appropriations, there is every evidence that such increases will be accompanied by greater control. Speaking at the twenty-fourth SREB Legislative Work Conference, Frederick T. Gray stated, "Because higher education has become so large and complex, because it is requesting and receiving an increasing amount of the tax dollar, and because of its importance to the individual, the state and society, legislators feel more and more responsible for higher education in their respective states."[2] This feeling of responsibility will result in greater demands for accountability. These demands for accountability will bring about increasing calls for efficiency and effectiveness - two sometimes misunderstood and often misapplied terms.

Community college presidents must be prepared to present convincing cases in two especially sensitive areas. One of these is in cost, the other in programs.

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2 Gray, Frederick T., "A Closer Look at Legislative Concerns About Higher Education," Proceedings, 24th SREB Legislative Work Conference, August 27-28, 1975, Southern Regional Education Board, Atlanta, Georgia.

A common criticism of legislators, and others outside the field of education, is that colleges are unable to justify their costs in relation to results. Generally, higher education has not been able to present concise information in an understandable way. The demands for clearer explanations will increase. The traditional method of reporting cost by full-time student equivalent (FTSE) is no longer adequate. In a comprehensive community college, the wide variety of programs make averages misleading. To add to this dilemma, little agreement exists on the definition of FTSE.

A step in the right direction may be to determine adequate funding levels on the basis of student-contact hour cost. After four years of study, the public junior/community colleges of Texas initiated a system of appropriation requests based on the actual cost of teaching one student for one hour. Using the eight accepted elements of cost, and by identifying programs by areas, each community college can now report exactly what its costs are in a way that is useful to the institution and understandable to the public. The college now knows what it costs to teach a student for an hour, whether the subject be English, physics, or auto mechanics. From these data, formulating a reasonable

budgetary request for presentation to the Texas legislature is a simple process.

This type of cost accounting, while helping to ease some of the pressures on the community college president, may result in others. The system focuses attention on the high cost programs and makes them prime targets for economizers. It also reveals unusual cost variations between institutions in similar instructional areas. Another issue growing out of the system is that of cost based on the numbers of students enrolling in the college and cost based on those actually completing courses. These are all problems of accountability which require presidential response.

A second sensitive area evolves from the comprehensive nature of community college programs. Community services and continuing education are terms used to describe an expanding service area for the community college. To many people who do not recognize their importance, including some makers of public policy, these programs are expendable in the battle for economy. The community college president of the future will find it necessary to fight to preserve these services in the same way leaders in the past have often had to protect and promote career education.

There is much competition for the public dollar. The cost of state and national government has increased at a rate equal to or greater than that of education. Education at one time was the major social institution seeking public funds. That is no longer the case. Today a host of government agencies seek increased funding from legislative bodies which are firmly entrenched behind a political bulwark of "no new taxes." There is evidence that their position has widespread public support.

Assuming a steady-state funding pattern for the years immediately ahead, what, then, can the community college president hope to do to alleviate the economic pressures? There are numerous answers - none of them very encouraging. The call for "increased productivity" will continue to be heard. Governing boards and legislative bodies, in answer to increased funding, will continue to bring up the old criticisms about the less than arduous teaching loads of college professors. The charges of "overbuilding" and "overexpansion" will be made frequently. Some of these charges have an element of validity. In actual fact, however, they will not stand up under close scrutiny and do not afford opportunities for significant economies.

The community college president in the future will be faced with these economic pressures in every phase of his college's operation. It will not be the matter of merely holding the line or retrenching slightly. Much more important will be the value judgments that will have to be made.

For most colleges, the teacher-student ratio, or faculty load, provides the most significant means of balancing income and cost. Already, some colleges are operating at high teacher-student ratios. Alone, however, it cannot provide the relief needed. Because of the complexity of its curriculum, the comprehensive community college has many pressures from within and without which limit what can be done in faculty productivity. Accrediting agencies have regulations on teacher-student ratio. Expensive career programs may, of necessity, have limited enrollment and therefore relatively high student costs. Resolution of economic problems by the elimination of high cost programs is no resolution at all. In attempting to do so, the institutional purpose can be altered, and the institution could cease to be a "community college."

The teaching faculty is the largest single professional group on any community college campus. For that reason, it

tends to have greater influence on the allocation of funds than do other segments of the college staff. Faculty power alone may be a reason why significant savings cannot be made in the instructional program. Of more serious consequence, however, is the pressure which may be brought on other segments of the college by the faculty. In a critical time, such programs as student services and instructional media may become targets for cost cutting. These departments do not have a well-understood system of measuring productivity. With the faculty, productivity is determined by student or credit hour load. But counselors are not able to present a clear picture of productivity. The same is true to a great extent of the staff in instructional media.

If the predicted enrollment decline of the 1980's becomes a reality, the community college may lose one of its features which has resulted in lower costs -- the use of part-time instructors. Most community colleges, from necessity or choice, employ adjunct faculty to staff many classes. In some institutions twenty-five percent or more of the classes are taught by persons on a part-time basis. The educational value of such practice is not an issue in this paper; the economic value, however, is a matter for consideration. In

most institutions, part-time instructors are paid at a lower rate than are full-time people. This reduces the cost of instruction and for many institutions has been a means of paying full-time faculty better salaries than could otherwise be provided. With decreasing enrollments, it may be assumed that the first to go will be the non-tenured, less than full-time teacher. When this happens, the unit cost of instruction will increase as the load is assumed by full-time staff who are on higher salaries and fringe benefits.

Reduction in enrollments must inevitably result in reduction in staffing. Despite the fact that community colleges have still shown growth, much of this may be attributed to the expanded programs to serve new clientele. Those in positions to know report that, over the next fifteen years, even community colleges in growing areas will face the necessity of reducing staff.

Raymond E. Schultz identifies five problem areas related to potential staff reduction. He lists these as 1) reduced enrollment, 2) reduced levels of financial support, 3) inflation, 4) low faculty turnover, and 5) changes in student course and program selection.[3] Schultz points out that many colleges

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[3] Schultz, Raymond E., "A Sane Approach to Staff Reduction," Community College Review, Vol. III, No. 3, January 1976, Raleigh, North Carolina, p. 6.

find themselves overstaffed in some areas and understaffed in others. This, he said, is not a new condition, but one which presents unique problems when on the one hand reduction in faculty must be made, and on the other, new people must be employed. Such must be done, however, if the educational goals of the institution are to be met.

While most faculty members would favor the seniority system as a guide to reduction of faculty, this may not be the best approach for the community college. There are several reasons for this. The seniority system would give less financial relief since those being released would be the short tenured, lower paid faculty. Such a practice could result in the termination of faculty members from minority cultures and of women in some fields because these groups generally have the shortest tenure. It can bring about a growing imbalance among faculty, curtailing input of fresh ideas and viewpoints which young faculty members bring to an institution.

Whatever else the community college may face, increased economic pressures will head the list. These pressures will permeate every aspect of the college and all other problems will be in some way related. Relationships to the federal

government, collective bargaining, attitudes of state legislatures--all of these can in some way be measured by the impact which they will have on the economic health of the community college.

IV

THE PRESIDENT AND COLLECTIVE BARGAINING

> "Collective bargaining began to make significant inroads into the American professoriate in 1969, when the first union contracts took effect in major four-year colleges and universities. In the seven years since, faculties at more than 400 of the nation's 2,400 institutions of higher education have voted to unionize. The expansion has been neither easy nor comfortable."[1]

This statement introduces the most significant issue in community college management today. The movement in collective bargaining is just beginning. The president must be prepared to cope with its pressures as they will be reflected in all phases of administration.

The community college is strongly influenced by two worlds. One is the traditional academic community which

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[1] Means, H. B. and Semas, P. W., (Ed) Faculty Collective Bargaining, Editorial Projects for Education, Washington, D. C., 1976.

earlier two-year colleges often sought to emulate. The other is the business community with which the modern community college has strong bonds. Both of these worlds have helped shape the management of the colleges and the administrative styles of their presidents.

On the one hand, leaders of community/junior colleges have often sought to adopt the posture of "shared responsibility" in administration. In this process of sharing, the faculty has played a traditional role in management, especially in academic matters. The administration and board have often been concerned almost exclusively with fiscal affairs, construction, legislation, and other management tasks. Students have sometimes been given a limited role in institutional management. This pattern was prevalent during earlier history of the two-year college.

With the rapid growth of the community college in the past three decades, many have developed management systems at the other extreme of the spectrum. MIS (Management Information Systems) is a term widely used in the administration of community colleges. Names like Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education and National Center for Higher Education Management Systems have become familiar in

the educational community. Both faculty members and administrators converse easily about the "systems approach" or "management by objectives."

The reasons for these varied patterns are too numerous to list. A few are especially significant. In their efforts to be community institutions, the two-year colleges have formed close alliances with the business and industrial communities. Members of the business community have been brought into the college environment, primarily as advisers to career programs. This regular contact between representatives of business and members of the educational community has had its impact on institutional management.

The philosophy of the community college has brought about changes in composition of the faculty. A college faculty was once considered a unique group of people educated in the traditional academic disciplines. This is no longer true. In the typical community college of the '70's, "professors" of welding, auto mechanics, data processing, and a host of other occupational fields may outnumber those teaching humanities, social sciences and other academic subjects. Many of the former come directly to the institution from business and industry and usually present

skills and experience in lieu of some of the normal requirements for university degrees. This melding of vocations with the teaching profession has had a profound influence.

There are many reasons for the current trends in community college management. Most are directly related to the nature of the institution, its program, its purpose, and its constituency. All of these have led to a new element in institutional management. That element is collective bargaining. The rate at which this trend is developing is seen differently by those involved in community college education. Many administrators and board members see it progressing with great speed and disastrous results. For some faculty and other employees, it is occurring too slowly and too infrequently.

Only 400 of America's 2400 college faculties are parties to collective bargaining contracts. The significance is that this occurred in a six-year period--from 1969 to 1975. Though the number of colleges with collective bargaining is still small, it must be noted that where elections have been held, faculties have voted FOR a bargaining agent

ninety percent of the time.[1]

The incursion of collective bargaining has been greatest in community colleges. Some of the reasons for this have been cited in earlier paragraphs. The movement has slowed in recent months but it has not stopped. Twenty-four of the fifty states have enacted laws granting bargaining rights to public employees. Legislatures of other states are debating the issue. Hearings have been conducted on proposed federal legislation dealing with the subject.

The current lull in activity, or the infrequent news that a faculty has rejected a bargaining agent, is no valid source of relief to the president who sees collective bargaining as an anathema to his or her approach to management. He or she may find solace that only about one in five community colleges now have collective bargaining. That is small comfort when one considers that four-fifths of these institutions are still subject to organization -- a field too fertile to be ignored by the organizers.

For most community college presidents the question is not "if" but "when." Those who attempt to ignore or stop

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[1] ibid.

the movement are certain to be unsuccessful. The fortunate will be those who face the issue of collective bargaining as a problem, not a disaster.

In collective bargaining, the community college president has a new role. Presidents have always faced pressures from faculties but rarely on a comparable basis. Consequently, it is a new experience.

Industry has had several decades in which to refine collective bargaining techniques. Both management and labor have become experts on their respective sides of the bargaining table. Members of the higher education community, on the other hand, are inexperienced in this arena, and this inexperience has been apparent in most early efforts. The traditional concept of collegiality, wherein the president, deans, and other administrators are a part of the faculty, have made role definitions difficult in collective bargaining. The limited nature of their sources and levels of revenue puts community colleges in a different position than that of manufacturing enterprises. The price of their product, education, cannot be adjusted as easily as the price of shoes. Appropriations by state legislatures, many convening only every two years, and local tax sources that require a vote of the people, do not give educational

institutions the freedom to negotiate in the same manner as industry.

Early laws were often modeled after those of industry, and for the reasons above, have frequently been less than satisfactory. College faculties and boards have tried to pattern their negotiation procedures after those of business and met with disappointing results. But this is changing. Today collective bargaining is becoming an accepted part of the educational community, particularly to that segment known as the community college.

The community college president's position must be defined in a way remarkably different from that of the past. Traditionally, the president could define his own position within certain limitations. If he chose to be a strong academic leader, he could assume that role, delegating to others the management responsibilities of the college. In earlier days, colleges seeking a president were likely to place great emphasis upon his teaching ability and upon his published research.

On the other hand, if the president wished to do so, he could delegate to others the responsibility of the

academic program, concerning himself almost entirely with the management of the institution. In some cases, especially in the independent sector, presidents have sometimes defined for themselves even more narrow roles, limiting their time and energy, for example, to fund raising and development. Such options may still remain open to the community college president except in one area. His role in collective bargaining must be clearly delineated.

The president must be prepared to assume an appropriate posture at various stages of the collective bargaining process. If collective bargaining has come to the college prior to the appointment of the president, then that person will have an adjustment problem. A far greater number of presidents, however, must engage in the entire process from early discussion to implementation.

This first period may well be the most difficult one for the chief executive. It is at this time that the employees will decide whether to choose a bargaining agent. The president must demonstrate a commitment to the governing board of the college without alienating faculty and staff. The president will have strong personal feelings about what

the college is and should be in the community. For these reasons, the president must exercise considerable restraint during the period of time in which the faculty and other employees decide the future of collective bargaining for the institution.

The president's responsibility for the edification and leadership of the board is never greater than when collective bargaining is being considered. Wisdom will be required to lead the board to creation of a philosophy of bargaining. The president's actions and those of the staff and board must never come under question relating to the outcome of elections. They must act as responsible leaders and insure careful observance of the law.

The bargaining stage of negotiations requires another role for the president. Neither the chief administrative officer nor members of the college's governing board should be directly involved in negotiations. Having chosen their team, the president and the board must stay away from the bargaining table, yet at all times, remain in control. The president, in particular, should be constantly aware of the proceedings and keep the team advised on the position of the board and on the capabilities of the institution.

The president can never act in a way that will weaken the position of the bargaining team.

The implementation period in which the terms of the contract are filled is the time for strong executive leadership. The president is responsible for insuring that both parties to the contract observe all its provisions. In doing so, he must strive to create that atmosphere of collegiality that draws people together in a creative environment. At the same time, he must analyze the results of the contract to determine its impact upon the institution, to identify problem areas and develop a program to send back to the bargaining table when renewals are required.

Few responsibilities of a community college president will bring greater pressures than that of collective bargaining. The identification of his or her role, a commitment to the institution, its staff, and its students, an interest in the constituency of the college - all of these demand the best. The president can, under many circumstances, delegate to others much authority and responsibility. If a mistake is made, it may usually be corrected. In collective bargaining, however, the president can never totally abdicate the position of leadership.

V

THE PRESIDENT AND GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

> "The Court of Appeals . . . held that where the failure to rehire did not result from statements made by the teacher during a faculty meeting . . ., nonrenewal of her teaching contract had not resulted in violation of her rights of free speech and no questions of procedural due process arose.
> Affirmed."[1]

The above statement is from a court decision, a happy but costly ending for the defendants in the case, the chancellor and board of a community college. It was costly in the sense that the college spent $16,000 defending administrative action in federal courts at two levels. In addition to the cash outlay, the institution suffered additional loss in staff time over a period of four and one-half years.

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[1] Marie J. Bradford, Plaintiff-Appellant v. Tarrant County Junior College, Joe B. Rushing, Chancellor, et al, etc., Defendants-Appellees, No. 73-1650, United States Court of Appeals, Fifth Circuit, April 4, 1974.

The relationship between higher education and the judicial system has undergone dramatic change in the last two decades. In an earlier time, colleges were rarely challenged in courts on matters that today are routine subjects of litigation. A host of federal and state courts have rendered decisions which have influenced the process of institutional management. These decisions have resulted in needed clarification of rights for college students and employees, while at the same time it has placed administrators in a position of requiring refinement of their policies and practices. While generally resulting in improvement, past decisions, and the prospects of future ones, will always be factors bearing on community college administration.

Through the turbulent decade of the '60's, colleges and universities found themselves turning to the courts seeking restraining orders, injunctions and judgments against those who attempted to disrupt the orderly process of education. Increased faculty militance and a new emphasis on "due process" have seen colleges and universities appearing often as defendants in conflicts over employment. Supreme Court decisions such as those in the Roth and

Sinderman cases have motivated college employees to seek redress of grievances in the judicial system. As postsecondary education moves into a period of leveling enrollments, the community college president can assume that efforts to adjust to this new era will result in more frequent trips to the courthouse. Despite all the wisdom which can be utilized in developing tenure policies, procedures for financial contingencies, and guarantees of due process, the courts will still remain the final arbiters of conflicts between employee and employer.

Though perhaps less traumatic than litigation, the complaints lodged with EEOC (Equal Employment Opportunity Commission), or comparable agency, are factors with which the president of the future may expect to contend. Equal opportunity is the law of the land. It is something which should be embraced by the higher education community as a reachable ideal. The path to that ideal is not easy and perhaps the journey will never be complete. It is a goal which must be pursued, however, and community college leaders have no more important tasks to perform.

Unlike the courts, which are not as readily accessible to all because of cost, the EEOC is available to every employee in higher education. Regardless of the validity of the complaint, the college administration is always on the defensive. Even in trivial matters, the personnel officer or other responsible administrator can plan to spend many hours and many dollars in defending the institution against claims of discrimination. The community college president may take important steps to minimize the vulnerability of the institution to charges of discrimination. The chief administrator is under constant pressure to insure that the personnel policies, procedures, and practices of the institution insure equal opportunity. One who has a loathing at seeing one's own name on a citation should perhaps seek employment other than that of a college president.

Courts and government agencies are not the only sources of pressure felt by the community college president. Pressures are becoming more pronounced within the states where legislatures and other agencies are having an increased voice in the management of higher education.

> "One claim advanced by administrators of public institutions is that they cannot be

> responsive to needs arising from changing social conditions because state agencies exercise close control over administrative and policy decisions."[2]

Statements similar to this are being heard more often and usually are made in connection with comments about appropriations. All government agencies, as well as education, are placing greater demands upon the state for adequate funding. Competition for the public dollar places the state official in a position requiring discriminating decisions. Claims, usually by the uninformed, about the inefficiency and ineffectiveness of higher education have a bearing on legislative appropriations. The rapid growth in many states of educational institutions has resulted in real or imagined overlapping and duplication. A recent article, describing the fiscal plight of education in Alabama says,

> "A not uncommon duplication of programs and entire institutions is creating a strain on state revenues and an atmosphere of

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2 Glenny, Lyman A., et al., Presidents Confront Reality, Jossey-Bass Publishers, Washington, D. C., 1976, p. 79.

increasingly bitter competition for funds."[3]

It is these fiscal pressures which are forcing state officials to place restrictions and controls on higher education - not only in the construction of facilities but in the expansion or even continuation of programs.

Coordination of public higher education has become a watchword in many states in recent years. Even in the private sector, religious denominations have often established "coordinating" bodies with power to curb college boards in their often unchecked efforts for growth and expansion. Coordination is not a voluntary enterprise. If it is ever achieved, it is only when some central agency is given the authority exceeding that of college administrators and governing boards of institutions. Such controls strike at a major principle long held to be an essential feature of education - institutional autonomy. In all probability, institutional autonomy has never been as great as imagined, but without question, it will be restricted in the future. This condition requires the greatest wisdom and expertise

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[3] Winkler, Karen J., "Has Alabama Overspent for Higher Education?", The Chronicle of Higher Education, April 12, 1976, Vol. XII, No. 7, Washington, D. C., p. 1.

on the part of the president to lead the board, the faculty, and the entire college family in finding ways to function effectively under greatly reduced institutional freedom.

Increased centralization and control by external agencies did not come about overnight. In the 1950's loud cries went out against "federal aid to education" by representatives of the public and independent interests. More often than not, this outcry against federal money for local schools and colleges was prompted by a fear, rarely stated, of what might result from the Supreme Court's action in 1954, striking down a segregated educational system. The independent sector of higher education was demanding, "separation of church and state." At the same time, both sectors, public and private, were competing for limited federal funds and clamoring for greater extension of public support.

The advent of Sputnik I had a traumatic and immediate effect on federal spending for higher education. Chagrined and embarrassed that the Soviet Union had demonstrated what was interpreted as scientific and technological superiority by launching the first earth satellite, many of the nation's leaders responded by blaming the system of public education.

Though much of the blame may have been unjustified when examined under the light of reason, the result was the beginning of numerous programs of added support to education. Very shortly, there was passage of several measures; the National Defense Education Act, the Technical-Vocational Education Act of 1963, the various phases of the Higher Education Act, and other laws which established programs providing money for education. Student financial aid received great emphasis during the 1960's with the movement toward equal educational opportunity. Work-study, loan programs, and more recently, the Basic Educational Opportunity Grant, have become common features on today's college and university scene.

More specialized kinds of financial assistance - such as programs of the Department of Labor and the Justice Department - have been added to an already complex picture. To the lexicon of NDEA and other early acronyms now are added LEAA and CETA with no end in sight for such alphabetical arrangements.* With the end of the conflict in Vietnam, thousands of veterans came home to take advantage of the GI Bill. With the passage of the Cranston Amendment, many

*NDEA refers to the National Defense Education Act, LEAA to the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration and CETA to the Comprehensive Education and Training Act.

colleges and universities intensified efforts to bring veterans into the educational environment. It is a rare college today which does not find itself participating in a great number of federally funded educational programs.

Passage of laws affecting higher education is one thing. To have these laws interpreted in regulations and policies is an entirely different matter. Today the community college president is faced with an enormous volume of regulations, many of them contradictory, most of them restrictive, and the newer ones especially, vague and uncertain.

The picture is not likely to get better. The rising economic pressures on the college will force the institution to seek funds from a variety of sources even though such funding may carry undesirable restrictions. Even the most well endowed or adequately financed colleges seek additional funding for special purposes. These are accompanied by increased control, since most of the resources are public funds and must be handled as a public trust by the appropriating agencies. Even the institution which accepts no public money is not exempt from regulation by government. The right of the student as a consumer is a responsibility which the

public cannot ignore. Despite claims of their independence, the so-called independent college is, in effect, a quasi-public institution. It is chartered by a state or other public agency to render a public service. Therefore, it has obligations to abide by law, and is not free from some degree of government control.

Resolutions by associations, declarations of independence by institutions, or isolated protests by individuals will not remove the specter of government control. With an increasing shift of the cost of education from the consumer - the student - to the taxpayer, such controls will and should be maintained. The critical issue affecting the community college president and his governing board is not whether controls should be maintained or removed but that the institution be able to operate effectively within a framework of regulations designed to protect the interest of the public. Constitutionally, public education is for the benefit of society, the only basis upon which one can defend its support by taxation. That principle must be upheld.

The reaction of the president to the increasing pressures of national and state regulatory agencies will, to a great extent, determine his or her success as a leader. It will be important for the administration of every college to take

a firm stand in protecting the institution as well as respecting the rights of the public. What should the president's response be when faced with a government order which is believed to jeopardize the integrity of the institution? Extremes should be avoided. The president should not surrender immediately. At the same time, precipitous, defiant action could place the institution in an indefensible position. Presidents in the future will, more than ever, need to share experiences and gain assistance from this sharing wherever possible.

The community college president in the last quarter of the Twentieth Century will be occupied with legislative matters. Of equal or greater moment than the role of legislative advocate will be that of influencing policy for implementing educational enactments.

VI.

RELIEVING THE PRESSURES: COURSES OF ACTION

There are no simple solutions which can be applied with equal success to every community college problem. There are, however, some actions which must be taken if the issues are to be resolved. Some of these, with local adaptations, are appropriate for all community colleges.

1) A new emphasis is needed in institutional research. The community college may be victim of its own claims to being a "teaching institution, not a research institution." A systematic means of gathering, analyzing, and acting upon management information is an essential characteristic of the effective community college of the future. The solutions to most major problems will have their origins in solid institutional research.

2) Multiplying the number of news releases is not the answer to restoring the faith of the public in higher education. Discover what the public knows about its community college. Identify the public's expectations. Provide that knowledge and

information which the people need and deliver those services which they desire. Use creative ways of telling the community college story. Emphasize its uniqueness, but never picture it as an oddity of less than first quality.

3) The financial constraints of community colleges will be met by imaginative long-range planning. Whether the solution is to be found in additional revenues or reduced costs, or both, productive planning is essential. In the past years, planning has been predicated upon rapid growth. Planning for the years ahead must take into consideration the possibility of leveling enrollments and major shifts in sources of students. Seek means of coping with budgetary problems by increased productivity instead of merely curtailing services. The problems of finance will not be resolved by the administrator alone. Steps to maintain institutional solvency must be based on plans involving governing boards, the college staff and the constituency of the institution.

4) Avoid the tendency in times of pressure to withdraw from the mainstream of society. Maintain, even strengthen, community ties. Support other segments of higher education as these institutions seek solutions to the same problems. Whenever possible, present a united front to the legislators and to the public.

5) Administrators and their governing boards must be willing to make the hard decisions and carry out difficult actions when these decisions and actions are necessary. Be sagacious, fair, and resolute when the time comes to discontinue programs no longer useful, reorganize departments for greater efficiency, and reallocate resources when it is the right thing to do. The problems of America's community colleges will not be resolved by timidity or indecisiveness.

6) One word best describes the action needed to cope with the challenges of collective bargaining -- PREPARE. If possible, prepare before it becomes a reality. When collective bargaining is in effect,

seek to make the system work in the best interests of the institution, its students and the community it serves. Profit by the experience of others. Build a library on the subject and know what is in it. Attend some of the many workshops being held and involve Board members and other key administrators. Develop a philosophy of bargaining and quietly implement this philosophy into a plan, hopefully before such a plan is needed. Work hard but keep a low profile!

7) Relationships between community colleges and governmental agencies are always crucial ones. The future of these relationships can be greatly affected by the action of community college leaders. Maintain a firm posture in dealings with other agencies. Be willing to go to court when an issue is important. Analyze the long-term benefits and liabilities when applying for government grants. Determine whether what appears to be a windfall may, in the long run, become a burden. Be sensitive to the political climate. Join with other

community colleges to present a common front on matters of legislation affecting higher education. Resist erosion of local autonomy, an essential quality in community college vitality.

8) Share with others who face the same problems. Seek assistance through organizations designed for that purpose. In the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges, the community college administrator has his strongest ally. It provides the best source of information about community colleges in America, and is an organization which conducts many projects of vital concern to its members. Growing in importance today is the Association of Community College Trustees, another organization coming to grips with current issues of management. It is through these and other voluntary groups that the community college will find many of the answers to tomorrow's problems.

SUMMARY

The college presidency has long been a prestigious position. Most polls of the public's attitudes have usually

listed the office of college or university president along with those of Supreme Court Justice and United States Senator as being the most highly respected positions in the country. There is evidence that some "slippage" has occurred in recent years, but at least for the community college, the position of chief administrator is an exciting and satisfying position of public trust.

In the preceeding pages, current problems facing the community college president have been discussed. The list is not exhaustive, but those listed have one thing in common--they will not go away and will become more pronounced during the last quarter of this century.

The public's attitude toward the values of the community college can never be taken for granted. Leadership in the field has a continuing task of interpreting the institution to many publics. In doing so, reliance cannot be placed on broad generalizations of the advantages of college education. One of the successes of American education is that it has produced a citizenry informed enough to intelligently question the value of education itself. For these questions, educators must provide answers that are convincing and which demonstrate that results are worth the amount invested.

Costs of postsecondary education, like costs of all other enterprises, will continue to increase. Unlike business, the community college supported by public funds does not have the flexibility of resources to respond to inflationary pressures in the same manner. When the cost of manufacturing shoes increase, that increase can eventually be passed on to the consumer. The community college cannot simply pass on the additional cost of its product to its customer and still maintain its integrity as an open-door, democratic institution.

Collective bargaining in community colleges may receive an impetus from, and at the same time, contribute to the economic pressures. When faced with the threat of financial retrenchment, employees quite naturally look for security. This is especially the case in a time of a tightening job market as has been the case in education during recent years. This security is often sought in collective bargaining, either as a college organization or an affiliate of a union. If employees are successful in efforts to unionize, their added strength may bring greater pressures on the resources of the institution, thereby intensifying an already difficult situation. College presidents face the prospect of a continued cycle of financial - employee - financial pressures.

To many community college presidents, the declining enrollment of veterans over the months just ahead will bring mixed feelings. On the one hand, there is concern over possible decreasing enrollment which will dictate the painful steps of retrenchment. On the other, there is joy over the prospect of relief from the multitudinous regulations of the Veterans Administration! Most colleges must daily cope with V. A. rules which touch every phase of institutional life from counseling to class attendance. When these are gone, restrictive regulations of other agencies will be there to occupy the community college president as he goes about meeting the requirements of equal opportunity, student aid, categorical grants, and a plethora of other activities. All of these are the result of good causes and sound purposes.

The job of community college president has been pictured here as one of great pressure with short tenure implied. To an extent this is true and has always been. The difference is that pressures change in nature and intensity, and the needed reaction time is often shorter. Flexibility is a quality to be sought in the chief executive of the future.

With all this, the position of president of a dynamic community college is an exciting and rewarding one. No other segment of postsecondary education is so responsive as the community college, nor is there one offering greater opportunity for service. With all the problems, the chief administrator has unlimited opportunity to exercise creative leadership -- even to help bring about conditions where the pronoun, "he," is not the only appropriate term to use in referring to the occupant of the president's office.

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